

Message Text

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17

ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8156

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, PINS, BU

SUBJECT: RAINS CONTINUE AND FOOD SHORTAGES BEGIN

REF: SOFIA 824

1. RAINS CONTINUE TO PLAGUE BULGARIAN AGRICULTURE AND ALTHOUGH SITUATION IS WORSE IN SOFIA BASIN (WHERE WE HAVE HAD RAIN ALMOST EVERY DAY FOR PAST TWO WEEKS) WEATHER PICTURE NATIONWIDE IS ALSO POOR. IN RECENT DAYS SEVERE STORMS WITH HIGH WINDS AND HAIL ARE REPORTED TO HAVE DONE DAMAGE TO FRUIT, AS WELL AS GRAIN, CROPS IN NORTHERN BULGARIA. FRUIT CROP IN VARNNA REGION IS AT LEAST TWO WEEKS BEHIND SCHEDULE, AND NEWSPAPER REPORTS SAY THAT VEGETABLE HARVEST HAS ALSO BEEN DELAYED 14-21 DAYS.

2. AS RESULT, USUALLY POOR DISTRIBUTION OF SPRING FRUITS AND VEGETABLES FOR DOMESTIC MARKET IS EVEN MORE COMPLICATED, AND SOME SOFIA RESIDENTS HAVE REMARKED THAT SHORTAGES ARE WORST THEY HAVE EXPERIENCED FOR SOME YEARS. SITUATION IS NOT HELPED BY MEAT SHORTAGES WHICH ARE REPORTED NATIONWIDE "IN ORDER TO FULFILL CERTAIN EXPORT OBLIGATIONS." WHEN NEWS OF MEAT SHORTAGES WAS ANNOUNCED THREE WEEKS AGO MANY RATIONALIZED IT WOULD CAUSE LITTLE HARDSHIP SINCE BULGARIAN SUMMER DIET LEANS

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TOWARDS FRUITS AND VEGETABLES. IF THESE, HOWEVER, ARE

IN SHORT SUPPLY AS WELL PUBLIC DISSATISFACTION WITH
SITUATION COULD BECOME REAL ISSUE.
BATJER

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